

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of claims:

Claims 1-4 (cancelled).

Claim 5 (previously presented): A vehicle occupant protection apparatus, comprising:

a control device for a vehicle occupant protection device configured to output a control command;

an impact sensing device connected to said control device; and

a device for sensing an object or a person in the interior of a vehicle disposed spatially separate from and connected to said control device for receiving the control command output by said control device, said device including:

a sensor for sensing an object or a person in an interior of a vehicle;

a memory; and

a control unit connected to said memory for storing sensor data or data derived therefrom in said memory upon

receiving a corresponding control command from said control device, said control unit causing an impact code transmitted via an interface to be stored in said memory.

Claim 6 (original): The apparatus according to claim 5, wherein said control device is programmed to output the control command if the vehicle occupant protection means is triggered.

Claim 7 (original): The apparatus according to claim 5, wherein said control device is configured to output the control command as a function of an impact signal of said impact sensing device.

Claim 8 (original): The apparatus according to claim 5, wherein said control device is configured to output the control command if a start of an impact is detected when an impact signal exceeds a given threshold value.

Claim 9 (previously presented): A method for sensing an object or a person in an interior of a vehicle, which comprises:

sensing with a sensor whether an object or a person is in the interior of the vehicle;

supplying sensor data or data derived therefrom to a control device, arranged spatially separate from the sensor, for a vehicle occupant protection means;

storing the sensor data or data derived therefrom in a device containing the sensor when there is a corresponding control command supplied to the device, wherein the sensor data ~~are~~ or data derived therefrom is stored if the vehicle occupant protection means is to be triggered or is triggered.

Claim 10 (cancelled).

Claim 11 (previously presented): The method according to claim 9, which comprises storing the sensor data or data derived therefrom if a start of an impact is detected.

Claim 12 (previously presented): The method according to claim 11, which comprises terminating the storing step if the vehicle occupant protection means has not been triggered.